

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

January 28, 2003

5:30 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Pinard, Shea, DeVries

Messrs: V. Lamberton, S. Tellier

Chairman Lopez advised that the purpose of the meeting is discussion relative to the Assessor positions review and recommendation.

Ms. Lamberton stated the first thing I would like to say is I gave each one of you a copy of the definitions for the different point factors that we have in our classification system here. In 1999 the City made a deliberate decision to have this system in order to look at jobs and rate jobs equally based on levels of responsibility and complexity and independence, etc. This is the beginning tool that one uses when one is analyzing jobs. Each one of these factors has different levels of points assigned to it dependent upon the position and what the duties of the position are. All I can tell you is that the Board asked me to look at the Assessor position. There was a concern from what I felt or understood about the commercial assessor position and what grade that should be at. The proper way to look at jobs is to look at similar jobs. You should never look at one position in isolation of any others because you are not going to rate it properly and you are not going to grade it properly because all positions have some sort of relationship to one another. Consequently, I asked Steve Tellier and Tom Nichols to fill out questionnaires as well so that I could look at the positions and make comparisons between the duties that each position had. They did complete the questionnaires and they delivered them to our office and then I had a woman, Christine Martinsen who works for me, go to the Assessor's Office and do what we call a desk audit. She reviewed the questionnaires with both of the incumbents and she also interviewed Steve Tellier regarding the commercial assessor position. Part of that process is finding out more information, clarifying things, affirming things...somebody tells you they do something (not in this instance, don't misunderstand me) but then they can't show you anything to support that so you have to take all of that into consideration when you are looking at positions. Now remember this process is looking at positions. It has nothing to do with the incumbents or the quality of work or the great work they do. It has to do with

positions and how they line up within the City. In part that is what I had written in my letter to you. If you go to the letter, as you know as we were looking at these jobs both Christine and I...we do things independently but then we discuss them to get different perspectives. Once we had the data on what the positions are required to do it became increasingly apparent that the grades were not properly assigned. The first most apparent thing was if you look under the point factors there is a section that talks about supervision. That is Factor 7. You have 7A and 7B. Factor 7A asks the question "the kind and extent of the position's supervisory authority with respect to the manner in which such control is exercised and the degree of its completeness and finality." That is what kind of supervision is being provided to subordinates, whether it be direct or indirect, how much technical knowledge you need to have, etc. The second factor deals specifically with numbers – how many employees do you have that are support (clerical), paraprofessional, professional, graduate degree required, etc. There is a differentiation there. Based on the factors that were on record for the Assessors, they were getting credit for supervising 20 to 40 clerical and paraprofessionals or 10 to 19 technical or professional positions. That is not the case. There aren't that many employees in that department so that was a problem to begin with. Then we looked at the level of supervision that is exercised and one of the things you are doing when you are looking at that is you are looking to see what level of knowledge and education and complications the subordinate positions have. In other words if you have a whole bunch of Masters level positions and you have 14 or 15 different functions or divisions it is going to be more complicated for the department head to supervise those people because of the complexity of the subordinates jobs versus having support staff who may have a lot of work to do but it is repetitive – you know they are going within certain guidelines and everybody knows what the guidelines are, etc. That was also overrated so when you combine the two of those immediately the position goes from a 26 to a 25. If you don't even want to talk about any of the other factors, when they are put in the proper level that happens automatically. However, I will go over some of the other factors with you. One of the things we are looking at are other department head positions in the City and other positions that are around the same grade or a little bit above or a little bit below and that is what you need to do. You need to look at things in relative terms so that is what we did. If you look at Page 2 and you go down to the second paragraph from the bottom it talks about the factor of supervision received and that factor as you can see defined it tells you "the nature and degree of deliberate, planned supervision exercised over the work of the position by higher authority. Such control is positive and reflects the definite decision of superior authority to limit the scope of work and the kind and finality of decisions permitted." Now you may think that all of the jobs that are department heads should be rated the same for that, but in fact they are not because it would be improper to do that. The different departments have different programs. The more programs you have the more complicated it gets. There

might be programs where there are no guidelines or laws or anything that require you to stop doing something or require you to do something. The Assessors positions were receiving the same number of points in that particular area as the Airport Director, the City Solicitor, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief and the Highway Director. You cannot compare those departments to the Assessor's Office. The Assessor's Office in fact provides an important function but there aren't the same number of programs and complicated issues going on in the Assessor's Office as there are in those other departments. We looked to see what other department heads were getting in that factor and we believe that it should be rated at 95 and not 100. Some of the other positions that are getting rated at 95 are the Tax Collector, the Water Works Director, the Welfare Commissioner, the Building Commissioner and the City Clerk's Office and if you start to look at things in relative terms, which I can give you...this is a little thing that we did a year or so ago. It lists all of the departments and how many positions they have assigned to them. It gives you a little bit of a perspective...if you are looking at those in relationship...just by the number of employees and the area and the different programs that are underneath those departments you can see that the Assessors Office is more like the City Clerk's Office and more like the Tax Office and more like the Building Department and Welfare and Water than it is like Highway or the Airport. You would not give the Assessors the same number of points in that factor as you would the other positions. The next factor is called "Guidelines Utilized or Available." It says, "the extent to which decisions made and actions taken are controlled by precedents, prescribed work practices, operational limitations or other guidelines." The Assessors have a function to perform. They perform functions based on their knowledge, their licensures and then by rules and laws that are provided so they have the basic principles of appraising and assessing and looking at the abatements – what are the rules for abatements, what are the rules for getting a Veteran's exemption or an elderly exemption. Those are black and white things. Either you are this age or you are disabled or you are a Veteran or you aren't a Veteran. You have to look at that whereas another position would have more things that there aren't any guidelines for. For example, the Airport Director, Fire Chief and Police Chief. There are laws and there are rules but then there is more than that because of the diversity of what they are doing. Currently the Assessor's positions are receiving 95 points and we believe that they should be at 90. Who else is at 90? The Building Commissioner, the Tax Collector, Traffic Director and Water Works Director. The next factor "Originality of Thinking Required" as you can see it says, "the degree of inventiveness, imagination and ability to innovate actually required by the work; the necessity for the solution of problems which have not been so dealt with before as to obviate the necessity for their original solution in the case at hand. If we go back to the second factor you will recall that there are guidelines, there are laws, there are rules and there are principles. There wouldn't be a lot of development of new programs because the Assessor's Office has a specific

function that is required by the ordinances so they couldn't decide to develop a whole new program that has nothing to do with the Assessor's Office without permission because of the fact that they are limited. Currently the point assignment for this is 95 and again based on the level of duties we believe it should be at the level of 90. Who else is at 90? The Building Commissioner and City Clerk. At 95 is the Fire Chief, Police Chief, the Public Works Director and the Economic Development Director position. The next factor is "Nature and Variety of Work Performed" is defined as "the degree of diversification of work in the position so far as that diversification represents inherently different kinds of work" like different programs and different purposes and different divisions "which require the use of unrelated techniques." In other words this focus is over here and this one is doing this and this one is doing that. Currently the Assessor's positions are receiving 95 points and we think they should be at the 90 level. Who else is at the 90 level? The Building Commissioner, Tax Collector and Water Works Director. Again, if we start looking at the organizational chart and looking at their enabling laws and guidelines then you can start to find the similarities. In addition to the supervisor...remember I already told you that if we just make the supervision proper based on reality the positions go from Grade 26 to Grade 25 already but then if you look at these other factors the positions would then go to a Grade 24, however, one of the positions is required to be the department head so you look at that independently to see how that impacts on the points for the department head. In fact now that department head can get points for the supervisor factor because that person is required to hire, fire, evaluate, etc. his subordinates. If you add those points back in, it brings that back to a Grade 25 and the other points would be identical to the other Assessors because all three Assessors have told me and probably will tell you that they all have the same level of authority, that they make decisions jointly and they vote on them for abatements and what not but the difference between the Assessors and the department head is the supervisory factor, which kicks in extra points and moves it up to a Grade 25.

Chairman Lopez asked so your recommendation is Grade 25 for the department head and two Assessor positions at a Grade 24 and I believe that Steve Tellier would like to dispute that. I believe everyone received a copy of his letter. He feels the grade should be 25 and that is why we are here tonight. Steve, you have the floor.

Mr. Tellier stated I am going to address the complexity of commercial appraisal. What I am reiterating is what I spoke about in a meeting with Ms. Lamberton as well. There is a great deal of additional disciplines that are required in commercial appraisal. I guess the market would be the best indicator. Why would someone pay \$300 for a residential appraisal and be required to pay in the thousands for a commercial appraisal? That goes precipitously higher the more complex the property is. For property of the complexity of the Mall of New

Hampshire or a 20 story high rise you would be paying in excess of \$10,000 for an appraisal. I can't imagine why the market would pay that kind of money if the educational disciplines and experience wouldn't be required for that complexity. With all due respect to Ms. Lamberton I disagree with her assumptions. We tried to keep the letter brief. I think a department head position that is in charge of an issue of the magnitude of the tax base of the City of Manchester of over \$6 billion that is shared with two colleagues and the nature of all of the surrounding issues that come up to it in comparison to other department heads, I think a Grade 26 is warranted. I don't have the factor analysis in front of me. I have participated in this process before with the City of Nashua. It requires analysis on each of the disciplines that Ms. Lamberton was good in explaining. What I don't have in front of me that I could use to object to that...I don't have those points. I don't have that. I would certainly defer to her skills. That is her background and her education but I am looking at what I think is appropriate and what I mentioned in the letter and what is fair. There has been a lot of talk about different scenarios. One would be a Grade 26 for the Chairman and a Grade 25 for the commercial and a Grade 24 for a residential. Another alternative could be what existed previous to Yarger Decker and that is where the Chairman was one grade higher than the other two. There are a lot of different scenarios out there. What I proposed to you is what I felt was fair. We had a vacant position that was reclassified and as a result of this, incumbents who were elected or appointed in 1994, meaning Assessor Nichols and myself, are I believe being unfairly treated in comparison to the rest of the City. I think it is somewhat of a fairness issue. We have a significant amount of issues to come. We just got out of a revaluation that we are still trying to address and we have to put together an RFP for another update. By all measurements by anyone on this Board or Committee and the citizens of Manchester, it is going to have to be done better and more clear than the last one and it is going to have to be at a minimum done every four years thereafter. There are new assessment standards being deliberated at the legislature. Local government is funded by property taxes. Whether we agree or not, that is the methodology. That is where over 70% of the money for this budget comes from. I can't imagine in any sense that these positions would warrant a grade any less than the Building Commissioner or being close to the Deputy Finance Director or others who are working on \$100 million projects and giving advice and reviewing performers. We kept our letter concise and brief and I think what we are asking from this Committee is to come out with a recommendation that is fair and appropriate.

Chairman Lopez asked Ms. Lamberton to address some of the points Mr. Tellier made regarding the commercial appraiser.

Ms. Lamberton replied first of all how much money people get paid to do jobs outside of our structure is irrelevant to our compensation plan. It is irrelevant to

our point factor system. I did provide you with salaries that are paid in other cities just because I know that question is going to come up but that is not a consideration here. To be a commercial appraiser it does require more hours of instruction and it does require more hours of supervised experience. That is true. However, once you get to work what level of responsibility do you have that is higher than the residential person or the department head as far as abatements are concerned? That is what we are talking about here. None. They have told me consistently that all three positions have the same level of authority for abatements so the fact that one person is a commercial person and one isn't really isn't relevant to the level of authority. That is the first thing. As far as the tax base goes, I just don't buy that. Does that mean if the tax base goes down we take money away from the Assessor and if it goes up we give them more? I don't see the relevancy. You know you have a Tax Collector who is collecting the \$6 billion and that position is a Grade 25. That doesn't make the job more complicated. Remember we are going back to the duties of the position. How do you appraise the properties and how do you do the abatements? Then it happens that a bill goes out and people have to pay that bill. As are as unfairly treated I guess I am still not clear on that. I cannot review a position...how could I possibly try to distinguish between a residential assessor a commercial assessor and a department head unless I had the facts and in order to get those facts I have to have information and that is exactly what I got from the position questionnaires, the desk audit and our discussions. The revaluation is nothing new. RFP's are nothing new. Are they going to have to do them more often? Yes. That is true. Are they going to do them better? That would be nice and that is great but they still have to do the revaluations. They had to get the revaluations done it just happened it was 10 years since it was done before. You now have a Supreme Court decision that says you are going to do them more often. It is just that the work is going to happen more often. Does that impact on the point factors? No because they are already being paid for that responsibility to develop those RFP's and to have the appraisals done it is just that it is going to be done more often.

Mr. Tellier stated I have a couple of comments. When Ms. Lamberton was going through the factor analysis on the "Originality of Thinking" not only is there objective originality of thinking but there is a lot of subjective issues that go along with the art of appraising. Quite frankly the Legislature in the State of New Hampshire is just realizing the complexity of assessor issues throughout the state. Regarding salaries, she picked the ones in New Hampshire. If we were to talk about comparative salaries in the larger communities across New England of which Manchester is one of only a dozen of this size, we could have different scenarios. I am not going to sit here and debate with the HR Director. I defer to her expertise. I am just going to talk about where the bulk of your calls come from the bulk of your issues and defer to the wisdom of the Board. We kept our letter

concise. We kept our issues to what was prevalent. The full Board of Mayor and Aldermen will vote in their wisdom on what they want to do.

Alderman DeVries stated I have a concern. We heard that we might be headed into a competitive marketplace for the Assessors positions based on the need...based on the State statute requiring a greater number of needs throughout the State. If we do find in fact that we are not able to hire those positions at that Grade 24 can you explain the ordinance that is currently in place that might allow a differential?

Ms. Lamberton replied it wouldn't be a differential. It would be a request to hire at more than minimum. Right now departments are authorized to hire employees at the minimum step in the salary grade but for difficult to recruit for positions, and we have some, the department head request through me to the Mayor to hire at a higher step and, in fact, we do. We just hired...I am not sure and I don't want to say the wrong thing but at the Health Department in the healthcare field it is very competitive salary wise so we were just required to hire someone at a Step 4 or Step 5 for that person to work here. That happens from time to time.

Alderman DeVries stated so what you are saying is that it would not change the top and bottom of the job's potential salaries but would allow us to bring someone in further up the steps than the entry level. Does that...for instance with the technology fields Information Systems had some difficulties hiring in the past as well. Does that work to overcome some of the issues that you might see if you have a competitive where municipal jobs are not keeping up with the private sector?

Ms. Lamberton replied there are some professions and it goes like this – in and out like civil engineers. You can't find any and then you have so many applications that you can't go through them and that is cyclical. Do I think that any decisions here should be impacted on maybe we are not going to be competitive in the future? Absolutely not because we are talking about trying to do things in relationship to our system. If, in fact, there was a problem down the road I had suggested to the Quality Council that we do an ordinance that would allow us to enhance a position by a percentage so you wouldn't impact on the grade because if you do you are messing around with the points. Say you need to add 7% on to the grade to be competitive, then you would go to the full Board and ask for permission to do that for competitive purposes.

Alderman DeVries asked so you have suggested that and it has not taken place yet.

Ms. Lamberton answered I haven't moved forward with that but certainly I would if I thought it was...

Alderman DeVries interjected I want to clarify that because I am not suggesting that we here today try to anticipate whether this will become a competitive job in the marketplace. I just want to get the answer on how we would handle that if that is the reality in the future.

Alderman Sysyn stated when Yarger Decker first came in here that was the reason they were here. They were here to make all of our positions competitive with the outside world. We are not competitive.

Ms. Lamberton responded we are competitive now.

Alderman Sysyn stated now because of Yarger Decker.

Ms. Lamberton stated like nurses. There is a shortage of nurses and consequently you have a lot of competition for nurses so we have to offer them more than minimum. Now you talk about Information Technology. Guess what? We announce the position and we get 100 applications because people are being laid off. Two years ago you would have been advertising and advertising and advertising with no results.

Alderman Pinard asked are you telling us that you are going to redline these two individuals or are they going to stay at their original pay grade and whoever comes in after them will be at the lower grade.

Ms. Lamberton answered first of all you grade the position and as far as the incumbents are concerned clearly the Board can let them continue with their salaries but you would do what we call an override. You would override the grade because you want the grade to be proper in the system. Steve is pretty young so if he doesn't leave for 20 years who is going to remember that that position should be a 25? So you move the position on paper to a Grade 25 but the Board can allow the incumbents to keep their salaries and that would be the appropriate thing to do.

Alderman Shea asked what is a Grade 24 salary range.

Ms. Lamberton answered the range is \$54,879 to \$78,245.

Alderman Shea asked how long does it take to get to the \$78,000.

Ms. Lamberton answered it would take 13 years.

Alderman Shea asked and the \$54,879...

Ms. Lamberton interjected in the interim people are moving up to their longevity salaries so the salaries are still going up and then when they get to step 13 as long as there is a step for longevity they would get that and if A step criteria were established for these positions that would also impact on the salary.

Alderman Shea asked longevity is every five years.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Alderman Shea asked what is the minimum again.

Ms. Lamberton answered \$54,879.

Alderman Shea asked that is just the salary without benefits, right. The total package would be how much?

Ms. Lamberton replied well you would add 30% on for health, dental, etc. or actually I think we are doing 32% at this point because the health insurance has gone up so high.

Alderman Shea stated there has been a lot of discussion between the Mayor and this Committee and others. If this were approved but then there was a freeze on the position we are not talking at all about that? This is just establishing this particular grade correct?

Ms. Lamberton replied that is correct.

Alderman Shea stated because obviously there have been discussions as to the composition of the Assessors, etc. but what we are indicating tonight is if we were to make a judgement tonight we would indicate our acceptance of your criteria, your evaluation or points as it were for this particular position and it has nothing to do with any other situation at this time in the Assessor's Office.

Ms. Lamberton responded that is correct.

Alderman Sysyn asked so the Grade 24 would just be for the vacant position.

Ms. Lamberton answered it would be recruited at a Grade 24. Two positions would be Grade 24 in the system and one would be a Grade 25. Personally I would support letting the incumbents retain their higher salaries. We call that an override.

Alderman Sysyn asked so the two people here would stay at their current level.

Ms. Lamberton answered that would be the Board's decision but I would certainly support and recommend that.

Chairman Lopez stated I think we should take this in steps and I think Alderman Shea hit it right on the nose regarding the position. If we were to decide on a Grade 25 for the vacant position how would that impact other people in the City?

Ms. Lamberton replied that is not the first question. The first question is where am I going to put those points? I have already analyzed this. Am I going to fabricate points under one of the factors? That is what you would be asking me to do and I am not going to do that. That is contrary to my professional ethics especially when it has already been stated repeatedly that the Assessors as far as abatements go have the same level of authority. Let's keep remembering that. What they had to do to get the jobs there is a little different yes and maybe the department head should be credentialed in commercial and residential but that is not a consideration here. We are talking about the work. That is what we are talking about.

Chairman Lopez stated the position of Grade 24 whereby the Board of Mayor and Aldermen appoint the individual and what he needs as far as a commercial type of individual so would you justify that into a job classification for people to submit their applications under qualifications that he would need.

Ms. Lamberton asked in other words when we recruited would we state that a commercial license was required.

Chairman Lopez answered yes.

Ms. Lamberton stated if that was the pleasure of the Board, certainly.

Alderman Shea stated I recall that a few years ago we ran into a lot of problems and I am not sure if Ginny was here or not but when we began to make exceptions to exceptions to exceptions. I am not sure if you recall but I think that in order to establish a "level playing field" we have to reach a point where we are going to treat every department and every employee the same because if we have confidence in Ginny and she explains this and it is very rationale and it is very systematic and it follows a criteria than if we make exceptions the next person coming along is going to use that as a bargaining tool and say look at what you did to this particular department – you didn't say this or that. My personal preference and everyone has their own judgement but my preference is we have to start at Point A. We can't start at Point C or D. We have to start at the beginning and say

if we have someone making determinations following a standardized fair rule whether it differs from the Assessors or differs from anyone else we as a Committee have to say look this is our decision. We can justify it. It is going to apply to everyone. It is consistent and it will work because no one is going to be treated any different than anyone else. That is my thinking on it. The minute we start making exceptions because of points that have been raised by department heads or people we are going to start putting holes in it. I think that if, for instance, we establish this particular criteria and if, in fact, we have to because of the lack of professional people entering and we have to do whatever you mentioned before about making sure that we hire people that are competent then we will have to do that but I think we have to establish these ground rules.

Alderman DeVries stated when we are discussing the A steps and if my recollection is correct last spring this Committee made some adjustments to A steps so that individuals are given consideration for education that they received while they are within the job but not education received prior to employment. Is that correct?

Ms. Lamberton replied that is correct.

Alderman DeVries asked so when we are looking at the A step as it might apply for these jobs it is only going to be for furthering the education after they are in place.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Alderman DeVries stated I thought I heard you make a reference that when you apply A steps it would increase the potential for that vacant commercial appraiser position.

Ms. Lamberton replied if one could establish what would be a criteria for an A step, which I am not sure...we would have to discuss that. You have to have three different things so what other education or certifications or knowledge in addition to your current licenses whether they be commercial or residential could you get that would make you do the job better. So they would have to come up with that and then there would be an eligibility.

Alderman DeVries asked and that would only be applicable once they hired. It would not apply to the vacant position?

Ms. Lamberton answered presumably each position has different credentials to a certain point so it might be that the vacant position has this for criteria and the other position has this that would enhance the knowledge and then the department

head might have that and then some more things on management like say an MBA or something along those lines.

Chairman Lopez stated before I ask for a recommendation from the Committee I want to just clear up one thing because I know the question will come up when we send this to the full Board as to whether we want to make a recommendation or not along with whatever we want to do. The incumbents...you called it an override where they keep their salaries. Is that what you are saying?

Ms. Lamberton replied yes.

Chairman Lopez asked does that mean they are frozen or what.

Ms. Lamberton answered again that is your decision not mine. You would have to decide whether or not you would want them to continue...they are going to be at the pay level of 26 and whether you let them continue to get steps that is your decision.

Chairman Lopez replied continue to get steps and continue to get merit pay and all of that, that is what you mean by override.

Ms. Lamberton responded what I am saying in an override is the position...if you get a computer printout telling you what all of the different positions are and what grades the Assessors are it would come out 24 and 24 but in fact we would override the payroll system to pay the incumbents a higher level of pay.

Chairman Lopez asked if the Board of Aldermen said freeze or continue in the system they still get the benefits of the step increases, etc.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Chairman Lopez stated I just want to clarify what we mean by override.

Ms. Lamberton replied it is just a term that we use.

Mr. Tellier stated before you take a vote I still object. I don't agree with my esteemed colleague. I think the Board of Assessors with the amount of disciplines that are required, the originality of thinking, all of the different disciplines that are involved, and continuing education I still respectfully disagree with that. I still feel comparatively with the rest of the department heads when Yarger Decker came in in 1999 that the department head should remain a Grade 26 comparative to the Building Commissioner. It is still under Deputy Police Chief. It is still under Assistant Fire Chiefs. It is still under the Deputy Finance Director. What

we are doing here right now is changing the playing field because an incumbent position was made vacant or rather a vacancy occurred and now we are doing something that had previously or this is the first time it is occurring to this degree so I object. I don't think it is fair. I don't have available to me the point factors. I can't disagree with Ms. Lamberton because I don't have the point factors on all of the different job descriptions that she alluded to. I don't have that available to me. That is her job. I am sitting here doing my job. I don't agree. I don't think it is fair and I don't think it is appropriate.

Mr. Nichols stated I agree with Steve. It was about two years ago that the HR Committee established a pay grade of 26 for all three of us. It was stated for any future Assessor also. Now here we are two years later because of one vacant position that Ginny Lamberton was supposed to review now all three positions are being looked at. I will let it go at that.

Ms. Lamberton stated when Yarger Decker came in there were preliminary reports done and then there were decisions that were made. The preliminary report for the Assessors was that the positions would be Grade 23, Grade 24 and Grade 25. The department head, I believe, was going to be a Grade 26 and the other two positions were going to be a Grade 25 somehow. I can't find anything to figure out what they were thinking and then the Assessors as well as many other employees went before the HRIC Committee asking for extra grades. I read the minutes to those meetings and there was no compensation that was...none of this was applied. If you read the minutes to it, it was well you know this person has been here a long time. It is unfortunate that the HR Director at the time didn't stand there and say to the HR Committee if you do this it is going to impact on this and here are the points for this and here is how the system works. You cannot find any of that in any of the minutes so that is how that evolved. A lot of positions I probably wouldn't have them be at the grades they are at but I am not going to deal with that now. I prefer to deal with them when they are vacant.

Chairman Lopez stated, Tom, I agree with you that it did come before the HR Committee but I also agree with Ms. Lamberton that there was no documentation like we have today. It was more conversational and it ended up exactly the way you said because nobody wanted to tackle it and there was no documentation whatsoever. You are right in what you said. I just want to point that out but she is also right.

Alderman Shea stated that is what I made reference to before. We were here in these Chambers and one person came in and said I want this one to be a Grade 25 and then somebody say wow that is great so I am going to make this one. My point, Ms. Lamberton, is that all positions in my judgement have to be reassessed to find out what the criteria was for moving people to different levels. This is

what I was saying before in terms of either preferential treatment or justification. I saw it here in these Chambers and you were privy to that and I objected to that because I didn't think it made sense at the time, although it passed and there was a vote to approve it. I say we are examining the Assessors and we should examine all of them – Finance, Solicitor, Planning, etc. That is why and I don't want to diverse too much but I asked last night for job descriptions from the different people making that recommendation because people have been moved up and half of us on the HR Committee don't even know from whence they are coming. A criteria was established and all of the sudden these people are being plugged in and they are obviously being given pay raises or benefits and they are justified on the basis that somehow someone got this position to a higher level. My recommendation, Mr. Chairman is that gradually we look into the different positions in different departments and treat everyone the same.

Chairman Lopez replied I agree with you and I think Ms. Lamberton is doing that when a person leaves, for example the Director of Youth Services. Now we have Jay Taylor who left so she is doing that. This situation occurred because as you all know one of the Assessors retired.

Alderman Sysyn stated it seems to me when Yarger Decker did their thing they did it on a point system.

Ms. Lamberton replied yes and if you look at a lot of the original decisions I agree with them. The problem was, no offense, when they started going to appeal to HR I see that they didn't use the system and there was nobody from HR saying if you give that person a Grade 26 it is improper and I can't support it in the point factor system. I read the minutes and I have seen which ones went up, which is what caught my attention, which is why you start looking into things to begin with. The other part of it is when you do something like this, like this is my job so I do it all the time so I am always looking at things in relative terms. If you sit in an appeal like the HRIC Committee did they are just listening to that person. They have no comprehension of what impact that is going to have or what the other relative duties are. Maybe it seems like a good idea at the time but it is probably not because you are disrupting the whole system that you just paid a lot of money for to make sure that everybody was being paid properly and equally for their level of responsibility.

Alderman Pinard asked, Steve, what do you call a fair deal.

Mr. Tellier answered let me go back to the original Yarger Decker issue for the record. The original proposal that came from Floyd Decker and his firm was for a Grade 24, Grade 25 and Grade 26 for the Chairman. At that time, during the reconciliation of the grading of city wide positions, the Board of Assessors put

forward an appeal to Yarger Decker and asked them to review and at that time they put Grade 26's across the board. I never saw a 23, 24 and 25. I would love to see that but I never saw that. At the time the ordinance was accepted, they were 26's across the board. The HRIC appeal from two years ago was an appeal by the now vacant position, Assessor Paul Porter, to ask for further consideration for the commercial activities that he was doing. The subsequent action by that Committee was that they all remain at a Grade 26. For the record, that is what occurred here and I have documentation to show that. You asked what the fair deal is. If they find fault with that the original structure was a Grade 24, Grade 25 and Grade 26. You have my letter. It is going to come out of this Committee and then it is going to be debated by the full Board.

Alderman Pinard asked do you feel that by going to the full Board you will be fairly treated.

Mr. Tellier answered we always have been in the past so I feel we will. It is really not up to that...

Chairman Lopez interjected what did you ask, Alderman.

Alderman Pinard stated I just don't think Tom and Steve seem to be happy with the way we are going and I was trying to get to the right path by asking the question so I asked Steve what is fair. The other thing is does he think he would be treated fairly if he were to go to the full Board and he said yes and that was the answer I was looking for.

Chairman Lopez stated I want to make one point. I think he will be treated fairly by this Committee.

Alderman Sysyn asked, Steve, do you think a Grade 24 is a good grade for somebody coming in.

Mr. Tellier answered we talk about Nashua all of the time. Their Assistant Director just left. Nashua has been a training ground for as long as I can remember. They continue to flow through personnel because they don't pay whether it is the City Clerk's position or the Assessor's position or others. That happened just last week. They have reviewed the salaries in Nashua three times in the last six or seven years. They keep adjusting them because they have to. We go back to the original Yarger Decker and that was a Grade 24, Grade 25 and a Grade 26. When they adopted the ordinances, the three Assessors were Grade 26. Assessor Nichols is a Grade 26 and so am I. I think the Director of that department in relative terms to other departments I think that is what is should be the recommendation of the HR Director notwithstanding.

Alderman Sysyn asked do you think a new person coming in should be a Grade 26.

Mr. Tellier asked in the vacant position.

Alderman Sysyn replied yes.

Mr. Tellier stated I recommended in my letter that it be graded as a 25 and that it be adopted as a Grade 25 because of the additional disciplines, the subjectivity, the objectivity, the creative thinking and everything that goes with it. Not only that but looking at the market. The resume that you received from one individual, that gentleman was the review appraiser from the NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals. He does utility appraisals. He is a certified appraiser and a certified NH assessor. That individual is making over \$60,000 a year. He lives right over the border in Goffstown but I don't know that he would come here...why would he come here for that sort of salary? With the complexities and the politics and everything else that comes with the job, most of the high profile assessing positions in the State in large communities are paying in the \$60,000's to start.

Alderman Sysyn asked how high do they go...

Ms. Lamberton interjected this is a factual salary survey and we have appraisers and assessors in here. We were talking about the salary for a Grade 24 being at \$54,000 or so. Nashua is \$51,100 at the minimum. Portsmouth is \$57,000. Concord has a Deputy Assessor who makes \$47,000 and the Real Estate Assessment Director is at \$58,000. Let's look at the maximums – our maximums far exceed any of the other cities and towns because we have 13 steps. That is the big difference. I just find it very hard to believe and frankly I have spoken to the director of whatever it is called at the state – Guy Fittel and he told me that Manchester pays more than anybody else. There is no question about that. I don't believe we will have problems recruiting. People take jobs for different reasons. Again, in the appraisal market I know I have seen it where it goes up and down and up and down. It might be that somebody wants to know they are always going to get their \$60,000 a year and have health and dental insurance and a retirement plan. Those are some of the things that people consider when they are looking at public employment.

Chairman Lopez stated I think also any job that we have had open in the City...for example you hired somebody, Steve, how many applications did you have for that position.

Mr. Tellier asked for a Customer Service Representative.

Chairman Lopez answered yes.

Mr. Tellier replied we had about 100 applications.

Chairman Lopez stated I know there are other positions in the City, Ginny you just hired somebody to replace Terry Desrochers. How many applicants did you have for that?

Ms. Lamberton replied we had 20 applications the second day we advertised it.

Chairman Lopez stated the pay in Manchester is very good.

Alderman Shea stated the other point we have to realize is that if we don't follow the guidelines suggested we are going to have trouble with all of the departments because we are going to be throwing out whatever criteria you are using and that is a real concern that I have. We are going to run into the same pitfalls if we decide that your point system doesn't work so right away we eliminate what you have done as a department head as it were and we are going to have no justification for anyone else coming to us because they are going to say well we have a different situation here than what your point system indicates so we are going to run into the same thing we ran into three or four years ago. We have to get to the basics...if we establish it as a Grade 24 and if we don't get people applying for this then we have a method in place to do something about it. I differ sharply. If people work in Manchester and people say well they move other places – I don't see too many people leaving Manchester. There may be policemen and firefighters and so forth but I don't see too many because we have upgraded this system to a point where it is a difficult situation for taxpayers and obviously I am one of them.

Alderman Sysyn stated my thinking is that you could do the Grade 24 but leave them at Grade 26 until they retire and then somebody new coming in would get the lower Grade.

Alderman Pinard asked is that a motion.

Chairman Lopez replied we are not accepting motions right now. I just want to make sure...you are saying a Grade 26 but that is what they are now and if we override and they get the same benefits and everything else what is the difference? We don't want to hurt them. I understand what you are saying.

Alderman Sysyn stated right because I don't think it is right to take away what they have. How can you give something to somebody and then take it away?

Chairman Lopez replied we are not taking any money from their pocket. From what I understand...

Alderman Sysyn interjected my problem is that somebody might come along and say if Ginny recommended a Grade 25 or whatever how come they are still being paid at a Grade 26.

Chairman Lopez responded because the Board of Mayor and Aldermen makes that decision and that is the policy. To be fair with the two Assessors there, from my understanding and correct me if I am wrong Ginny but when I asked the question about override they will still continue getting a Grade 26 pay and the merit increase and everything but the positions in the future and an example would be when Tom Nichols retires...

Alderman Sysyn interjected then it would change.

Chairman Lopez stated nothing would change. The positions are already there etched in stone. We are not taking anything out of their pocket.

Ms. Lamberton stated the positions would be changed to reflect Salary Grade 24 and 25. The incumbents would be able to, by the Board's authority, retain their current salary, which happens to be at Grade 26. If you are looking at the positions, the positions themselves are Grade 25 and Grade 26.

Mr. Tellier stated I would still ask that you consider Yarger Decker's original point system at a Grade 24, Grade 25 and Grade 26 and grandfather Assessor Nichols at the grade he was at until it is vacant. That would be my recommendation and my request. The positions themselves being perhaps reviewed...

Alderman Sysyn interjected well Tom Nichols is a Grade 26.

Mr. Tellier stated right and he should be grandfathered as a Grade 26 because that is what was adopted by ordinance. He should remain at that grade but if he leaves the next person would come in at a Grade 24 and the vacant position would be at a Grade 25, which would still be under \$60,000 for starting. That is what I am asking here.

Chairman Lopez replied right. If Tom Nichols retires, the position is a Grade 24 and you are still a Grade 25 as a department head.

Ms. Lamberton stated when you are talking about this there are positions and then there are incumbents. So the positions are Grade 24 and Grade 25 and the incumbents are being paid whatever. You could decide to hire Trainee Assessors at a Grade 2 you know.

Chairman Lopez stated I understand and we are getting mixed up here with positions and people. If you keep everything you have, the position is still what it is.

Mr. Tellier replied I think I understand what you are saying. I am still asking though that you revert back to Yarger Decker's original structure, which was a Grade 24, Grade 25 and a Grade 26. Obviously it is up the purview of the Board. There will be a recommendation from this Committee and it will go to the full Board. We are going to do our job. We are still going to do our job.

Alderman DeVries stated I think what you are saying is that with the original Yarger Decker and the three different grades what you would say is that the incumbent, Tom Nichols, would be a Grade 24 and you are looking to hire a Grade 25 for the vacant position at this point in time. I think the question to answer that goes back to Ginny. When you did the point analysis if I remember you said that you could only justify the two positions at Grade 24 and when the department head responsibilities were factored in you were able to bump one of them up to a Grade 25 is that correct?

Ms. Lamberton replied that is correct. I would have to fabricate points in order to support Steve's proposal and I don't want to do that because then other people are going to come here and look for upgrades and everything because I already said that these jobs should be here and they know their job is bigger or more complex and then they are going to want it and we are going to be chasing ourselves in circles.

Alderman DeVries stated that being said I would like to move that we send this proposal to the full Board with a recommendation.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I want to clarify. My understanding at this point in time is that you are actually recommending three separate positions by ordinance. The department head position at a Grade 25 and Assessor-Residential and Assessor-Commercial both at a Grade 24 with grandfather provisions for the employees within the positions. The motion would be to make that recommendation and also recommend that same be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for ordinance preparation because it will require a few changes to a few ordinances, some of which will come out of HR and some of which we would have to have the Solicitor review for the grandfathering clause

because I don't believe there is one at this point. I think we need to make sure that provision is there. That can all be done as part of Bills on Second Reading and also at that point I would add that the job classification which talks about the specific duties of those three positions would have to be further delineated out into three separate positions as part of the ordinance, which I am sure Ginny can do for you in concert with the Assessors.

Alderman DeVries moved to amend the motion as stated above and refer the item to Bills on Second Reading.

Chairman Lopez asked because this is such an issue are we wasting time sending it to Bills on Second Reading and to the full Board.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the recommendation will go to the full Board but as part of that requirement you have ordinance provisions that need to be changed and the process for the ordinances is to go to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading.

Alderman Sysyn asked so they would be grandfathered in where they are.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the grandfathering provisions would grandfather the incumbents in the positions, both at Grade 26, to receive all benefits as they currently do, which would include merit reviews and whatever cost of living increases come down the line and that sort of thing.

Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee